

REMARKS

The application has been reviewed in light of the final Office Action dated June 7, 2006. Claims 11-21 were pending, with claims 1-10 having previously been canceled, without prejudice or disclaimer. By this Amendment, new claim 22 has been added, claims 14-16 and 21 have been canceled, without prejudice or disclaimer, and claim 11 has been amended to place the claims in better form for examination. Support for new claim 22 can be found in the application at, for example, pages 30-42. Accordingly, claims 11-13 and 17-22 are now pending, with claims 11 and 22 being in independent form.

Claims 11-15 and 21 were rejected under 35 U.S.C. § 102(b) as purportedly anticipated by Kobayashi (JP 05-262057). Claims 16-20 were rejected under 35 U.S.C. § 103(a) as purportedly unpatentable over Kobayashi in view of Ohta et al. (GB 2306689).

Applicant has carefully considered the Examiner's comments and the cited art, and respectfully submits that independent claim 11 is patentable over the cited art, for at least the following reasons.

This application relates to an improved approach for producing a thermosensitive stencil. A thermoplastic resin film that is perforable by use of a thermal head is coated with a porous resin layer formation coating liquid comprising a water-in-oil emulsion of a polyvinyl butyral resin. The emulsion has a continuous oil phase and a discontinuous water phase, and the resin is present in the continuous phase and not in the discontinuous phase. Independent claim 11 addresses these features, as well as additional features. Use of such an approach enables stability of porous resin layer formation, a high coating speed, and an improved productivity, and in addition, the thermosensitive stencil produced utilizing such an approach exhibits sufficient stiffness and excellent sensitivity to the forming of perforations in the thermoplastic resin film.

Kobayashi, as understood by Applicant, proposes an image receiving medium for thermal ink transfer recording which includes a base material and a sublimable dye image receiving layer having a porous structure formed using a water in oil type emulsion of polyurethane resin. Kobayashi also proposes a method of forming an image receiving material that is used for thermal transfer recording in terminals such as a facsimile, a printer, and a copying machine and that is designed for easy release from the transfer recording sheet after recording, without thermal fusion therebetween at the time of transfer recording.

As pointed out in the response Applicant filed April 17, 2006, Kobayashi does not at all teach or suggest a method of producing a thermosensitive stencil, and the image receiving material of Kobayashi and the thermosensitive stencil formed by the method of claim 11 of the present application are in mutually different technical fields so that the image receiving material and the thermosensitive stencil paper differ in problems addressed, requirements and uses.

For example, Kobayashi does not disclose or suggest that the base material is perforated (or perforable) by use of a thermal head.

Moreover, since Kobayashi is in a different technical field, the subject matter of claim 11 would not have been obvious from Kobayashi, taken alone or in combination with another reference.

Ohta, as understood by Applicant, proposes a heat sensitive stencil comprising a resin layer of a material including polyvinyl butyral resin (see Ohta, page 6, lines 31 and Examples 1 and 5).

However, Ohta does not teach or suggest a water-in-oil emulsion of a polyvinyl butyral resin, as provided by the subject matter of claim 11 as amended.

As discussed above, the porous resin layer formation coating liquid utilized in the

method of claim 11 includes a water-in-oil emulsion of a polyvinyl butyral resin and therefore is stable for an extended period of time, so that the quality of coating liquid can be stably maintained in the course of the coating operation.

In a case of using a polyvinyl butyral resin as proposed in Ohta, such technical effects cannot be obtained. Comparative Example 6 of the present application shows that when using polyvinyl butyral resin, the dispersion caused separation and became unstable after it was allowed to stand for one hour (see application, page 47, lines 1-10).

Therefore, the subject matter of claim 11 would not have been obvious from Ohta. In addition, the subject matter of claim 11 would not have been obvious from a combination of Ohta and Kobayashi since, as pointed out above, Kobayashi is in a different technical field than that of the subject matter of claim 11 and/or that of Ohta.

Applicant simply does not find teaching or suggestion in the cited art of a method for producing a thermosensitive stencil, wherein a thermoplastic resin film that is perforable by use of a thermal head is coated with a porous resin layer formation coating liquid comprising a water-in-oil emulsion of a polyvinyl butyral resin, and the emulsion has a continuous oil phase and a discontinuous water phase and the resin is present in the continuous phase and not in the discontinuous phase, as provided by the subject matter of claim 11 as amended.

Independent claim 22 is patentably distinct from the cited art for at least similar reasons.

Accordingly, for at least the above-stated reasons, Applicant respectfully submits that independent claims 11 and 22, and the claims depending therefrom, are patentable over the cited art.

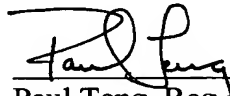
In view of the amendments to the claims and remarks hereinabove, Applicant submits that the application is now in condition for allowance. Accordingly, Applicant earnestly solicits the

allowance of the application.

If a petition for an extension of time is required to make this response timely, this paper should be considered to be such a petition. The Patent Office is hereby authorized to charge any fees that may be required in connection with this amendment and to credit any overpayment to our Deposit Account No. 03-3125.

If a telephone interview could advance the prosecution of this application, the Examiner is respectfully requested to call the undersigned attorney.

Respectfully submitted,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Paul Teng", is written over a horizontal line.

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